# Russell T. Gordon

## Works on Paper

## Laurie R. Deaton

It is with great pleasure that the Lakeside Studio presents Russell T. Gordon's one-man show. With the exciting introduction of the winter residencies we have developed year-round programming. Who better to be the initial resident than someone who has long been associated with the Studio. Russell has supported the dreams and ideals, talked, teased, chided and guided, and always believed.

Living in Lakeside for the winter, Russell worked from Thanksgiving through early April. Lots of silence, time for concentration and tennis have produced a surprising, inspiring show.

Ultimately responsible for this one-man show, for the Lakeside Studio, and for Lakeside Group's Chicago expositions, are my parents, John and Kay Wilson. Their compelling visions create our direction. They allow Lakeside Studio the freedom to evolve, providing incentive for progress. My brother John and I, and our staff, are dedicated to continuing this tradition.

Thanks must go to my husband Randy, for his patient and continued support. A special note of appreciation to Fred Fine, Chicago's first Commissioner of Cultural Affairs, for his many years of support, his concise statement of facts and his guidance. Thanks to my staff for their diligence and to Priscilla Barclay and Leslie Ventsch for the Lakeside Studio's innovative booth design.

Above all, Russell, thank you for this powerful show.

Laurie R. Deaton
Director, Lakeside Studio

**Cover: Ascension**

## Fred Fine

My first opportunity to view Russell Gordon's new drawings came while on a visit one weekend to Lakeside Studios. I was invited to be one of the first people to see a series that he had completed as Artist-in-Residence this winter, during a sabbatical from his teaching responsibilities in Toronto. While familiar with his facility and his capacity for invention, I was confronted with a representation of the furious dialogue that must have taken place as this work was being conceived.

There is an urgency present that lends both a theatrical intensity and a subjective immediacy. Even in the most passive of the pieces the ever present scraps of matter that float through all of the drawings make you aware of the fluid environment that surrounds each of the figures.

The figures seem to be representative of the vulnerability that is exposed during periods of revisionism in an artist's work. This is underscored by the drawings lack of gravity that adds to the ethereal quality. All of which corresponds to the vulnerability that is manifest by the conflict when an artist makes conceptual or stylistical changes. I find this to be the most dynamic of moments in the creative process.

I found Russell's work compelling and of exciting and dramatic interest.

Fred Fine

*Mr. Fine is the founder and retired chair of the Arts Management Department of Columbia College. He was Chicago's first Commissioner of Cultural Affairs from 1984 to 1987. He has been a leading figure in Chicago's arts community for years and the recipient of numerous awards and honors.*

## Russell T. Gordon

I have often wanted to produce work approaching the sacred; work which demands acknowlegement of its spirit and provides the viewer an opportunity for introspection. This series is a continuation of this interest.

*He seeks to express a personal relationship which he feels within himself. Spirituality, the unknown, and mystery become his field of reference. He is a thinker, a philosopher who expresses himself above all through symbolism, but in a way that is entirely free and personal...*

*This is a man totally in love with drawing, with the sensuousness of the line, with every unifying element reaching out, extending his work into the world.*[1]

*Gordon says that being alone is, '...the time to hear my innerself: I look at what I think, I hear what I see.'*

*These works are much about that type of aloneness– when ideas and imagination are gently and wonderfully nurtured and expanded.*[2]

*Kant, as we all know, claimed that the sublime does not exist in nature, but is introduced into it by the sensibility of men of a considerable degree of culture. So it may be that mysticity does not reside in pictures, but that pictures have in them a potentiality which enables a beholder of a peculiar disposition, of some aesthetic training, to infuse them with a magic which excites in him the mystical experience.*[3]

The above quotations demonstrate what others in the art world have said about me and my work relative to the mystic and spiritual, and the general Kantian philosophy from which I derived most of my thinking for this series. Words that constantly came to mind while working were implication, mystical, spiritual, religious, sign, reference and language.

When working with events or legends already well-known, the originality of a painter's style and technique lies in his disposition of forms and colors and his use of light on the surface. If I can clarify and/or heighten the viewer's preconceived notions through my use of these techniques, I am being original. If I provide completely new meanings of equal potency, that too, is originality. This fascinates me!

Another of my preoccupations is movement in a static medium, an inherent contradiction. Some artists, like Michelangelo, are able to overcome the static medium and produce a sense of natural movement in their figures. Others, Botticelli, Fra. Angelico and Antonio Pollaiuolo, for example, depict their motion scenes in a way I perceive as "stopped action". To build on this tension of visual contradiction and produce an emotional ambiguity is an ongoing interest of mine.

The use of body language and gestures as a means of communication also intrigues me and is evident in my work. This interest interacts with the "stopped action" phenomena and shows how the two are interdependent.

Finally, every day, on a fundamental level, I want to engage you, the viewer, with the painting's dynamics; I then want to pull you in. The multiple layers, the mix, the collage, the assemblage of elements from many different sources, and the juxtaposition provide energy and emotional force. It must be this way in my painting because it is this way in my life.

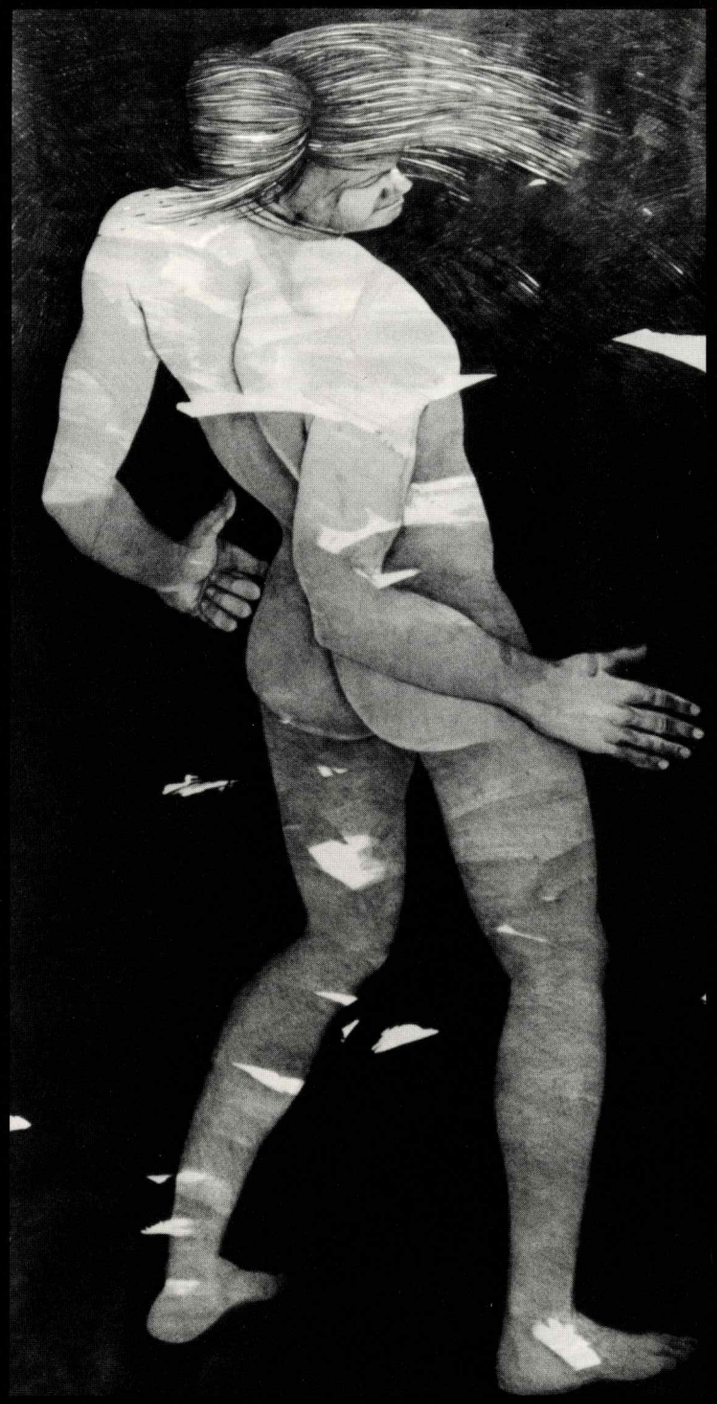
Many thanks to the Lakeside Studio for this opportunity.

Russell T. Gordon
Lakeside Studio
Lakeside, Michigan 1988

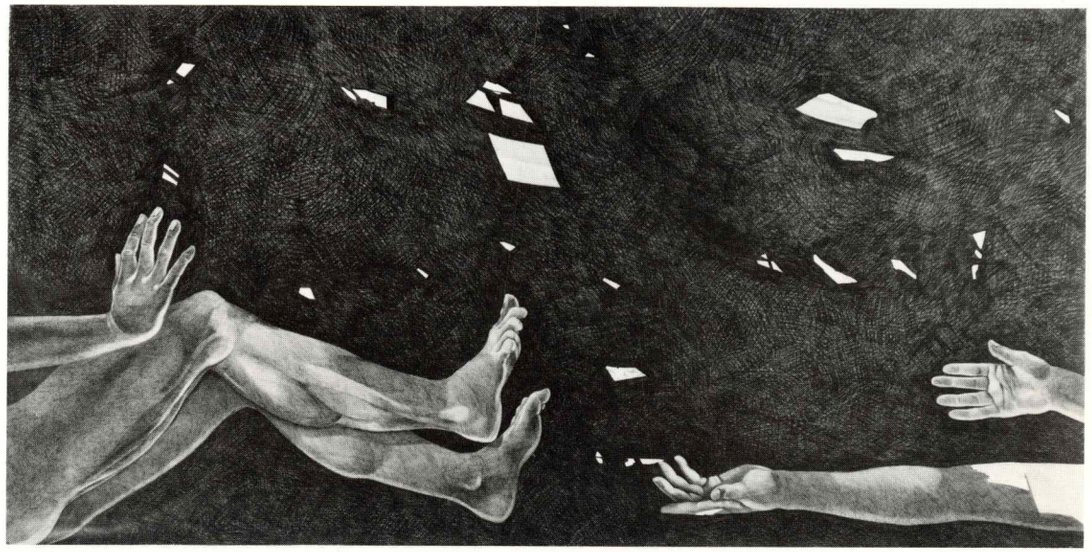
1 Andree Paradis, former editor *Vies Des Arts Magazine;* catalogue essay – *Russell T. Gordon, Recent Works,* Waddington & Gorce Gallery, Montreal, 1986.

2 Barbara Young, Head of Art Services, Miami-Dade Library System; catalogue essay – *Russell T. Gordon: Works on Paper,* Miami-Dade Library Gallery, Miami, FL, 1985.

3 Somerset Maugham, essay *Zurbaran* from the book *The Vagrant Mood,* Heinemann, 1952.



Rapture



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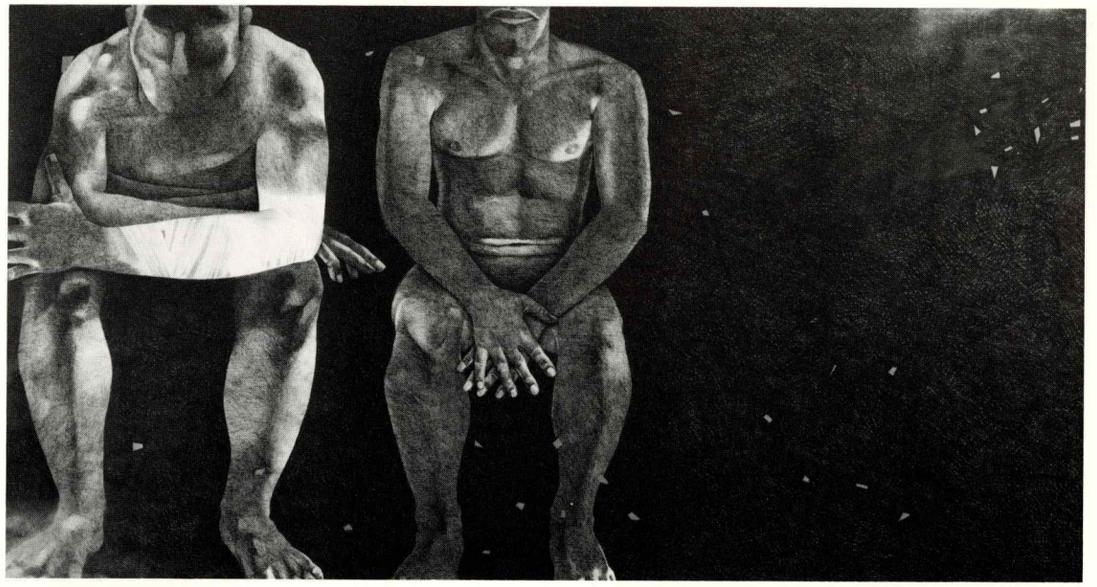
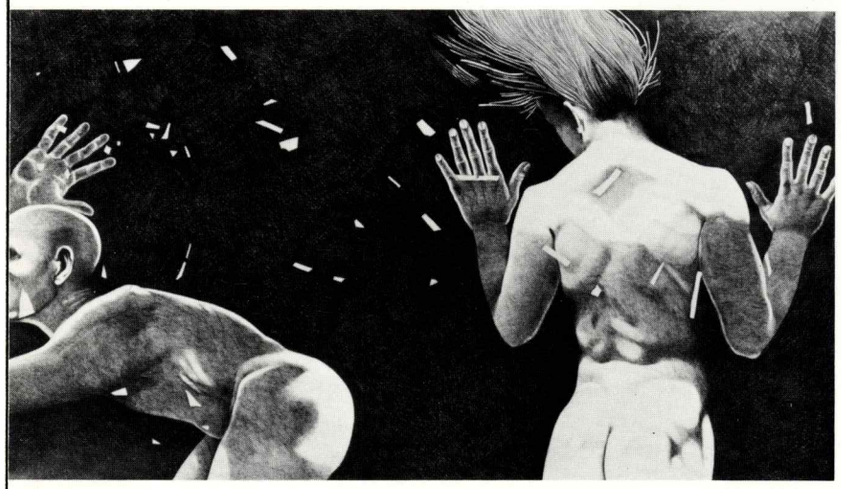
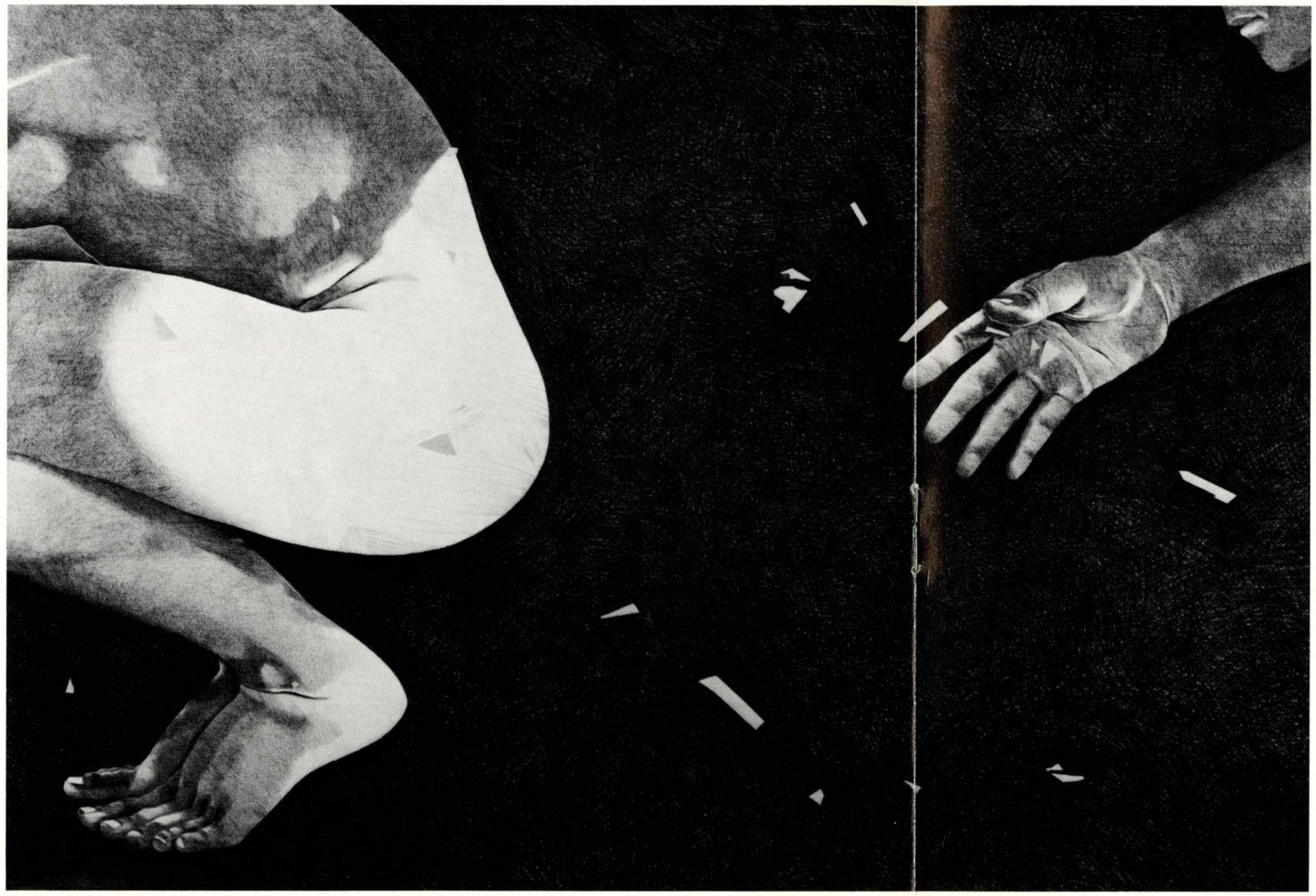


Communion

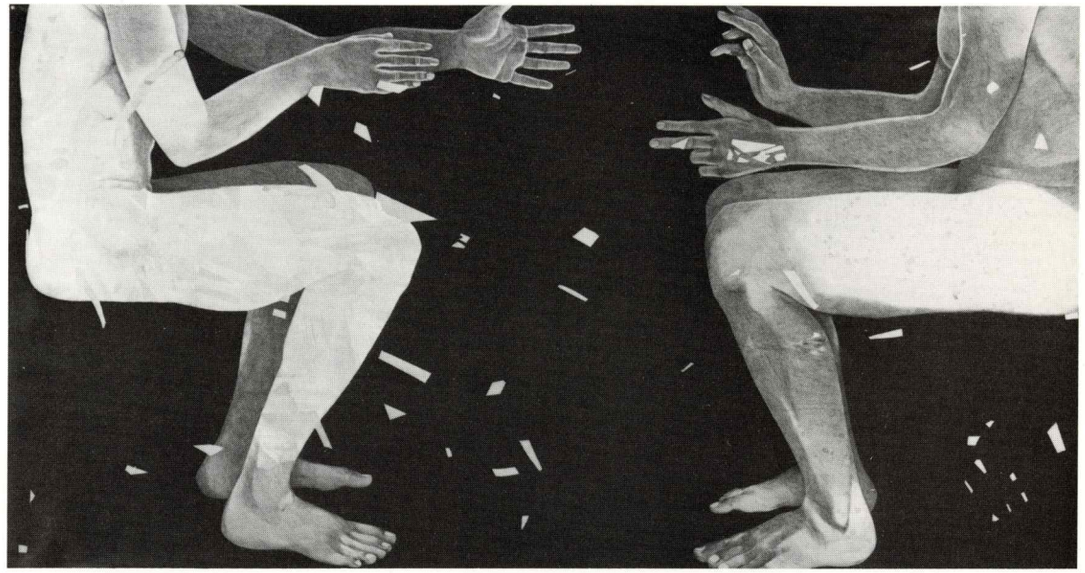


Expulsion



Creation

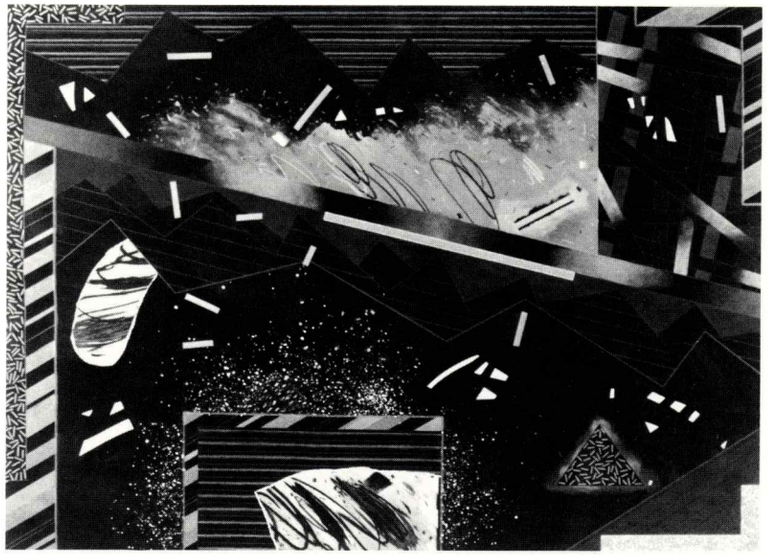
Iconographical Too



Annunciation

Iconographical One

Untitled I



Untitled II

Untitled III

## Selected Group Exhibits

1970 Oakland Museum Printsmakers Invitational
1971 *Black American Artists,* Whitney Museum, New York, New York
1971 *Poetic Fantasies,* San Francisco Museum of Art
1971 University of Utah Museum, Salt Lake City, Utah
1972 Cincinnati Museum, Cincinnati, Ohio
1973 *Extraordinary Realities,* Whitney Museum of American Art, New York, New York
1973 *Young Talent,* Ars Studio, Arhus, Denmark
1973 Quay Gallery, San Francisco, California
1974 San Francisco Museum of Art, San Francisco, California
1974 Quay Gallery, San Francisco, California
1974 First Biennale Internationale of Madrid, Spain
1974 Crocker Art Gallery, Sacramento, California
1978 *Museum Without Walls,* Security Pacific Bank, Los Angeles, California
1979 *Animals: Celebration and Communion,* Sonoma State University, Rohnert Park, California
1981 *Animals: Celebration and Communion,* San Jose Museum of Art, San Jose, California
1981 *Carnival of Critters,* Miami-Dade Public Library System, Miami, Florida
1982 *Afro-American Abstraction,* Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles, California
1982 *Selected Works by Five Twentieth Century American Artists,* Hastings Gallery of Art, University of California, San Francisco, California
1983 *Two Artists,* The Chevron Gallery, San Francisco, California
1984 *Tout l'Art du Monde,* Musee Maritime, Montreal, Canada
1984 *Works on Paper,* Waddington and Shiell, Toronto, Canada
1985 Waddington & Gorce, Montreal, Canada
1985 *Chicago International Art Exposition,* Navy Pier, Chicago, Illinois
1986 *University of California, Berkley Printmakers Then and Now,* Walnut Creek Art Center, California
1986 Black Creativity, Museum of Science and Industry, Chicago, Illinois
1987 *Chicago International New Art Forms Exposition,* Chicago, Illinois
1987 Joy Moos Gallery, Miami, Florida
1987 *The Artist and the Myth,* Monterey Peninsula Museum, Monterey, California
1987 *Recent Acquisitions,* Weissman Gallery, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

## Selected One Person Exhibits

1969 University of New Hampshire
1969 University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah
1969 Berkeley Art Center, Berkeley, California
1969 San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, California
1972 Ars Studio, Arhus, Denmark
1972 Vikingsberg Kunst Museum, Helsingborg, Sweden
1973 Gallery Alliance, Copenhagen, Denmark
1973 Quay Gallery, San Francisco, California
1976 Waddington Galleries, Montreal, Quebec
1976 Memorial Union Gallery, Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona, and traveling
1977 Braunstein Gallery, New York, New York
1977 Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco, California
1979 Waddington Gallery, Toronto, Canada
1980 Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco, California
1980 Waddington Gallery, Montreal, Canada (Paintings)
1980 Waddington Gallery, Montreal, Canada (Drawings)
1982 Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami, Florida
1982 Los Angeles Municipal Art Gallery, Los Angeles and traveling
1982 Waddington Gallery, New York, New York
1982 Braunstein Gallery, San Francisco, California
1983 University of Utah, Museum of Fine Arts
1983 Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami, Florida
1983 Theo Waddington & Co., Montreal, Quebec
1985 *Masks,* R. H. Murray & R. T. Gordon, La Maison de la Culture Cote des Neiges, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1985 Moosart Gallery, Miami, Florida
1985 Waddington and Shiell, Toronto, Canada
1986 Waddington & Gorce, Montreal, Canada
1986 Moosart Gallery, Miami, Florida
1986 The Allrich Gallery, San Francisco, California
1987 Joy Moos Gallery, Miami, Florida
1987 *Works on Paper,* Miami-Dade Public Library, Miami, Florida
1987 *Works on Paper,* Waddington & Gorce, Montreal, Quebec, Canada
1988 *Chicago International Art Exposition,* Chicago, Illinois

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## Collections

Philadelphia Museum of Art
Carnegie Corporation of New York
Philadelphia Print Club
University of Wisconsin
Oakland Museum
University of New Hampshire
Illinois Bell Telephone Company
New Jersey State Museum, Trenton
Duke University, North Carolina
Mills College, Oakland, California
American Telephone and Telegraph Collection, Boston, Mass.
Achenbach Foundation, Palace of the Legion of Honor, San Francisco, CA
University of Utah Museum of Fine Arts
Rosenwald Collection, Philadelphia
Cincinnati Museum of Art
Walker Art Center, Minneapolis
Canada Council Art Bank
Air Canada, Montreal
Shell Oil Calgary, Alberta, Canada
Bank of America, San Francisco, California
Miami-Dade Public Library
Imperial Oil of Canada
Mercantile Bank of Canada
Merrill-Lynch, San Francisco, California
Le Ministere des Communautes Culturelles et de l'Immigration, Quebec
Department of External Affairs, Government of Canada
Concordia University, Montreal, Canada
Westburne Collection, Montreal, Canada
I.B.M. Corporation, San Jose, California
Chevron Corporation, San Ramon, California
Monadnock Building, San Francisco, California
Citycorp Bank, Miami, Florida
Claridge Collection, Canada
Collectien Pret d'oeuvres d'art, Gouvernement du Quebec
Architectonica, Miami, Florida
Darier, Canada

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